Report

Differences in Gendered Division of Labour: A Comparative Study among the Four Tangkhul Regions

By

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The present study on the topic "Differences in Gendered Division of Labour: A Comparative Study of the Four Tangkhul Regions" was undertaken with an objective to examine differences within a culture. Focusing on a tribal community of Manipur, the study aims to unveil differences of gender setup associated with differences of practice. The study was examined through the perspective of agricultural practices which is the backbone of their economy.

After submission of Joining Report on the 11th of February 2015, the key informants were consulted and interviews were conducted on agricultural practices of different villages and regions of the Tangkhuls. The key informants were selected on the basis of their information and knowledge on the agricultural practices of the people. A preliminary survey was conducted through field visits (24 villages) to select the villages for the study. Four villages, a village from each region, were selected for the present study. Each region, the division of which is purely cultural, exhibit different agricultural practices which, in other words, could be referred to as intracultural variation.

Somdal village from the western region practices both terraced fields as well as shifting cultivation, the staple food (rice) is mainly cultivated in the terraced fields while shifting cultivation is mainly practiced for other crops. New Tusom village from the northern region practices only terraced paddy fields. The eastern group is represented by Ningthi village with *jhum* practice mainly for paddy cultivation. Shingkap village represents the southern zone also with jhum practice for paddy cultivation.

Fieldwork was conducted with the help of field guides selected separately for each village. With the objective to manage fieldwork activities consistently, orientation and

rapport building with the field guides were taken up prior to the fieldwork. Location of settlement areas and cultivation sites were visited side by side with narration of the work nature. Field Guides were selected on the basis of their knowledge on the village agricultural practices, social setup as well as on their conceptual command of the research work.

Household census was conducted in the initial period of data collection in the four villages. Informants were selected through household census on the basis of family units instead of individuals in order to assess gender division of labour within a family as a social unit. The census aided in locating the local residents who depends on agriculture for sustenance and in mapping out the gender composition of families in order to select the right families for the present study.

The first pilot study was conducted in Somdal village as a prototype to assess the validity of the techniques prepared for data collection. After fieldwork, the approach was reassessed and improvised. After every fieldwork, time was set apart for analysis of data and reassessment which contribute to crystalize the conceptual tools, analytical frameworks and enquiry concern to give a context determined outcome. This way, the analysis was a springboard for further thought as fieldwork continued.

Interviews were fixed according to the convenience of the informants. The most suitable time to sit and interact relaxingly at ease with the informants was in the morning, usually from 6:30 to 8:30 am. The informants, for the present study comprise of cultivators whose duties revolve around their agriculture activities. As such, their daily routine is attuned with their working hours in the field. However, evening visits and interviews were also taken up in the off season which was not feasible during the busy seasons of their cultivation as they usually reach home tired and exhausted from

their day's work. Agricultural sites were visited during the day and observations were made.

Book reviews before the fieldworks, in between fieldworks and after the fieldworks were an important feature in the study. This was done with the objective to verify the approach used for fieldwork and assessment of the data.

After the completion of data collection in each village, the data were meticulously sorted out separately. Gendered division of labour was compared with power relations of gender which was assessed through the prism of decision making and management. This comparison was initially done separately for each village which was later made a comparative analysis of the four regions altogether. The present study, as such, encompasses a wide range of data as four villages were studied and made a comparative analysis thereof. It further entailed a complex analysis as practices of the four regions were varied.

Within the term of my Post-Doctoral studies, I attended two seminars. The first is the 46th Annual Conference of the Indian Anthropological Society and International Seminar, November 8-10, 2016, Department of Anthropology, Manipur University (organized by Department of Anthropology, Manipur University in collaboration with IAS Kolkata, IGRMS Bhopal and ASM Manipur) where I presented a paper on "Gender Socialization Among the Tangkhuls of Manipur". The second is the National Seminar on Cultural Heritage of Manipur, September 7-8, 2017, organized by Department of Anthropology, Manipur University and Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Bhopal (IGRMS), in which I presented a paper on "Gender, Longshim (Dormitory) and Modern Educational Institution".

Three articles were published in the course of my post-doctoral studies. The first article, 'Gender, Health and Patriarchy among the Tangkhuls', was published in M. C. ArunKumar (ed.), *Health and Illness* (ISBN 978-81-8370-473-1), Akansha Publishing House. The second article is on 'Gender, Longshim (dormitory) and Modern Education', in M. C. ArunKumar (ed.), *Cultural Heritage of Manipur* (eBook ISBN 9781003132745), Routledge. The article is on 'Gender Socialization of Children among the Tangkhuls of Manipur', in Jibon Kumar (ed.), *Anthropological Research in North East India: Retrospect and Prospect* (ISBN 9788121218146), Gyan Publishing House.

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